

Testimony of Gary Allen
Appropriations Committee 02/21/2022

Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE
STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023.

Increase Funding for Centers for Independent Living by \$1 million

My name is Gary Allen I have worked at two Centers for Independent Living in Connecticut. I currently work at independence Northwest Inc. I have worked there for about 1.5 years. Before that I was employed at Independence Unlimited for 11 years. I work as an advocate and Information and referral specialist. Centers for Independent living (CILs) are nonresidential, cross disability, community-based, non-profit organizations. They are designed and run by people with disabilities to help other people with disabilities live independently. CILs are unique in that they operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization. Centers for Independent Living provide: Peer Support, Information and Referral, Individual and Systems Advocacy, Independent Living Skills Training, and Transition services.

Over the time that I have worked for the centers for independent living in CT they have been forced to cut services and staff because funding has been reduced over the years. The centers have been asked to do more with less year after year especially during a time where Connecticut experienced a fiscal shortfall. Connecticut's contribution to state Independent Living Centers is one of the lowest in the region. It is substantially less than what the surrounding states provide. It is important to increase funding, in order for the state's Independent Living Centers to provide the essential services that our consumers need in order for them to live independently in the community. Today I am writing to ask for an increase in funding of 1 million dollars to create a base level funding for CILs as recommended by the CT State Independent Living Council.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Gary Allen

Bristol, Connecticut

Advocate/Information and Referral specialist

Independence Northwest, Inc